

there somewhere! As I write (October) the F7 larvae are demolishing the local docks and dandelions.

The unusual male specimen that appeared in the F6 is very similar to one illustrated by Cockayne (1947. *Proc. Trans. S. Lond. ent. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 1947-48) on plate 6. He did not attach an aberrational name to the specimen and suggested that it was not a "genetic entity". The appearance of another similar specimen in my F6 would seem to contradict his conclusion. Perhaps there are others out there?

Can I draw any conclusions after all my efforts? Cockayne (*op. cit.*) asked whether *brunnescens* was the heterozygous form of the very dark ab. *fumosa* Horhammer. If our original male was indeed *brunnescens* then it is unlikely to have been a simple heterozygote as the inbreeding would have quickly produced a proportion of the unmistakable *fumosa*. This has not happened as yet. Secondly, despite Cockayne's scathing dismissal, temperature extremes applied to the fresh pupa do affect the colour and pattern of the subsequent adult moth.

Between 1928 and 1933 the late F. W. Sharman of Peterborough bred many specimens of *Arctia caja* ab. *petriburgensis* Cockayne with white forewings and red or yellow hindwings. I have a few of his specimens in my own collection and very beautiful they are. He began with a "rather dark" specimen reared from his garden and averaged four generations a year. I now look at those specimens in the knowledge of how much sheer hard work Sharman put into them. I wonder if my own enthusiasm will prove as durable as his? I salute his ghost!— MIKE BRYAN, Extons, Taunton Road, Bishops Lydeard, Somerset TA4 3LR.

A late scorpionfly

During a Bangor Bird Group field trip to the Lleyn Peninsula on 4 November 2001, BBG member Sion Jones caught a scorpion fly at Porth Meudwy, OS grid reference SH 163255. This proved to be a male *Panorpa germanica*. This extends the recorded flight period by about three weeks, as the provisional atlas (Plant, 1994) said adults of this species occur from mid-May to mid-July, but with a scatter of later records through to mid-October. Surely this must convince George W that global warming is occurring? Colin Plant has confirmed that this is the latest record in the national database.— JOHN BRATTON, 18 New Street, Menai Bridge LL59 5HN.

Gastrophysa viridula Degeer (Col.: Chrysomelidae): a further note

I fully agree with Richard Jones' estimate of this species as being "virtually absent from the south-east" (*Ent. Rec.* 113: 130), and have never met with it in the London district, Kent or Surrey. In Hertfordshire it was recorded from Tring by Elliman in 1902, and was apparently common on docks at Welwyn Garden City where the late W. O. Steel found it in about 1945, but these were the only records until recently. According to Trevor James, the Coleoptera Recorder for the county, there have been three records since 1970 – at Hunsdon Mead in 1984, Water End, North Mimms in 1990 and Benington in 2000. In each case, there were many individuals in

a relatively small area. In Sussex I have encountered it only once, on 15.vi.1974. That was on Lewes Levels, where I took a specimen by general sweeping – curiously enough just a year before Mr Jones obtained one in the same area – but was unaware that it was the first to have been found in East Sussex.— A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

***Oncomera femorata* (Fabr.) (Col.: Oedemeridae); a recent find in the London area**

Colin Plant's note (*Ent. Rec.* **113**: 230) on this interesting species reminds me that my friend Keith Lewis obtained one from oak *Quercus* sp., in Chalk Wood, near Bexley, north-west Kent a few years ago. My impression is that the beetle is probably almost general over, much of England, but being of rather obscure habits is probably often passed over despite its considerable size. It is indeed remarkable that the early stages and their habitat remain unknown. My sole find of this species was a male beaten out of ivy *Hedera helix* on a tree at Fairlight Glen, East Sussex, on 27 September 1949.— A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

Early mating in the Seven-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata* (L.) (Col.: Coccinellidae)

On 13 February 2000, at Trumpington, Cambridgeshire (vice-county 29), a pair of Seven-spot Ladybirds *Coccinella septempunctata* was engaged in mating activity on low vegetation at around 10.30 hours. The locality was a thin strip of south-facing grass verge along a fairly quiet road, bordered on the north side by hedgerow and woodland: a classic "sun trap". The morning was sunny, still and moderately warm, as was much of the winter and early spring of 1999-2000. On this occasion only four other individuals of this species were seen at this locality, but numbers visible there grew to 40 on 26 February (when no mating was observed) and more than 250 on 12 March (three mating pairs). The large number of Seven-spot Ladybirds in and around Cambridge during the second week of March 2000 suggests that the main emergence from over-wintering sites in that year occurred then. Majerus' standard work (1994. *Ladybirds*. HarperCollins), surveying the years 1985-1989, gives (p. 63) the earliest date for such pairing as 17 March (in 1989) and the mean for the four-year period 1985-1988 as 21 April, with emergence taking place in the second week of March in 1989, a month in advance of the more usual date. In a paper evidently written later (1992. *Ent. Rec.* **104**: 135-142 and 173-183) the same author reports mating as early as 25 February in 1990.

The behaviour of other species of ladybirds during the late winter and early spring period of 2000 also seems to have been seasonally advanced, but I did not note any further exceptional events. Many pairs of the Pine Ladybird *Exochomus quadripustulatus* (L.) were mating in the Trumpington area on 12 March, the date